ELLEN OSBORN'S NEW YORK FASHION LETTER

Winter Hats and How to Make Them, with a Few Hints on the Art of Combining Colors and Materials.

NEW YORK, Oct. 27.—Peggy was telling me this morning about her winter hat.

She said:

"It is the most delicious thing I ever wore. I took with me a comb and brush, and all my different side combs. I picked out the best saleswomen, that tall, slim, dark girl, you know, that has so much patience; and made her find me a comfortable seat in the quietest little show-room.

"Then I had her bring me hats. I don't know how many I tried on, I believe there were twenty-three different shapes, and I tried them all without trimming, and then two or three of each trimmed. Of course there were cheval glasses and hand mirrors and first we had the window shades up, and then we had them down. I made her get me all the new styles of veils to try with them, and—"

"With the window shades?" I asked.

"Yes, of course; I tried the veils and the hats with as much light as possible, and with as little. And the girl was so nice. She helped me with my hair. I had to see the best shapes with my hair low and with it high. I never was so tired, but it paid."

"You got a hat that suited you?"

"Perfectly; I shall never trade anywhere else; they do have the best styles."

"May I see the hat?" I murmured.

"Why, yes! to-morrow; I shan't make it until this evening."

"You won't make it? But I thought—"

"Really, Ellen, you are the most stupid—You hadn't an idea that I meant to pay $45 for an imported hat, when I have my winter coat and all the children's dresses to see to? I always trim my own hats, but how am I to know what to get unless I go and see the styles? Of course these girls are hired to show things. To be sure I did take her whole morning."

"And afterwards—"

"And afterwards I went to Blank's, they are cheaper, you know—and got a shape bent and wired just like the one I liked best, and bought my own materials."

I am used to Peggy's ways of reasoning and I make no comment on them. I have another friend, who—not being able to turn milliner—takes the owner of a little neighborhood shop with her to one or two of the most elaborate "openings," picks out the Paris confection that suits her, and has it copied by the small neighborhood hat-trimmer aforesaid at about one-fourth the former price, on an average, of the imported creation.

The soaring prices of millinery are largely accounted for by these and other curious feminine devices; and yet the average home milliner is honest and resourceful, and is fully entitled to the hints and helps she gets from the sellers of untrimmed shapes and from the multiplication of "made" bows and hats that need but a few garnishing touches.

The deepest pitfall in the path of the amateur milliner this autumn is the messiness, and when the professionals lean that way also, the result is some thing to admire—"wonder at" is the original meaning.

In this search for the picturesque, the new hats are piled so high and swathed so deep with superfluous ornaments that all the symmetry of the head and figure is lost in these monuments of misdirected industry. Peggy—say your worst of her—has taste, and the chances are she stole twice as many hours of the amiable but unhappy saleswoman's time as might otherwise have satisfied her, because in her marauding expedition she found herself confronted by mares' nests of velvet and feathers that would have made her forget her own name long before she thought of inquiring their prices.

Nevertheless, the beautiful hat exists, and with such modifications as conscience may suggest, Peggy's system is correct; the beautiful hat and the fashionable hat is, for every woman, the hat that is becoming.

First as to shape. The most distinguished hats of the season are, without doubt, the large Directoire and cabriolet hats with strings. To women of many styles and many ages these shapes are distinctly beautifiers; and, unlike other varieties of the picture hat, they may be attempted, at least occasionally, by the home milliner. This is because the hat itself is of consequence, while the trimming, though it ought to be rich, may be simple.

An exception must be made against those Directoires whose brims—of velvet—are elaborately stitched. An attempt to reproduce these at home usually ends in disaster. But equally in the mode are brims faced with soft folds of chiffon, with chiffon knots resting against the hair. And to offset this limitation, chiffon, unless one's features are classic, is apt to be far the more becoming.

Over the brim of a cabriolet hat should nod four or five long black plumes; and, fastening the velvet strings at the back, should be several small rhinestone buckles or pins. The strings may be, according to taste, an inch or two inches wide, and must be long enough to tie handsomely under the chin.

Plumes will be the feature the coming winter. At an earlier date it looked as if whole birds and brilliant breasts would be the novelty. But while these will be used enormously, they have not taken Directoire mortals into the empire in accord with the coming modes, which quite as expected, and plumes are more shaped, swathing crown. Two glorious, gray ostrich plumes are arranged in one side, and are caught in front by a large steel buckle, which also confines some puffy bows of black velvet. There is absolutely no other trimming except some black ribbon knots behind, against the hair, but I agree with Peggy that she has not had anything so artistically perfect—for her—in many years.

Other large hats, easily trimmed at home, but not recommended except for piquant faces sure of their becomingness, have wide velvet brims and Tam O'Shanter crowns made of bandanna velvet handkerchiefs, or else of soft surah silk or Oriental satin bandannas. Whole toques are made of these handkerchiefs so knotted as to leave coquettish, earlike ends sticking up at the sides. However pretty in its inception, a fashion like this is almost certain to become vulgarized.

Draped turbans in plain and fancy velvets can be managed by clever women and will have a good run until spring. Turbans, as well as toques, are of considerable size, and along with them are shown odd French bonnets. The poke of the season is a somewhat short-backed scoop shape, and is suited only to Madonna faces. It is often trimmed, incongruously, with rollicking bunches of feathers.

While the large toque with rolling brim of velvet comes nearer than any other to being the prevailing mode, as almost invariably becoming to pretty hair, the small, close-draped velvet toque, worn over the face, is also a favorite to accompany tailor dress. It is trimmed with stitched bands of cloth or silk, and a bird or an airy butterfly is added for garniture.

Kid hats in brilliant colors—white, tan, or scarlet—are other idols of the tailor-made girl; they have brims of white stretched kid and are faced with black velvet.

Hats of tan or gray broadcloth are high in vogue. These are not draped hats, like the usual cloth toque, but have straight, stiff brims.

A little later in the season fur hats will be as fashionable as they were last winter. Those thus far shown have been trimmed with lace almost exclusively.

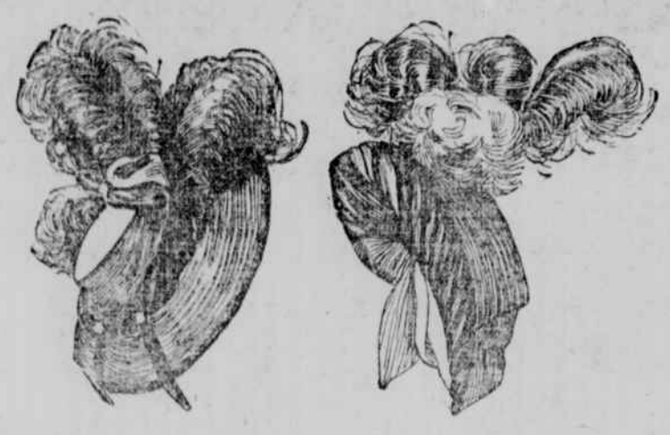
The prettiest hats for evening are the shirred tulle toques in soft, bright colorings.

The newest millinery ornaments are buckles, slides, and clasps of enamelled flowers and jewels in combination. A spray of pansies, powdered with cambochon emeralds, forms one bar of a big, brilliant buckle, designed to hold a bunch of wood-brown plumes on a hat of hunter's green.

The question of color is one that home milliners and others, should consider most carefully. When the hair is no longer all black or brown, but is neither quite white nor quite gray, a hat brim faced with black, especially a rich black, like that of velvet, should be scrupulously avoided. A facing of white lace—on a black hat, is desired—will, by contrast, put color into the hair. The new shades of blue might be employed with advantage.

As a rule, blondes are too fond of pink and brunettes of scarlet. It is only a certain class of dark beauties that can afford to wear the bright poppy reds. Yellow suits blondes and brunettes almost equally, but with the darker woman it should approach the orange shades, with the fairer, the straw colors.

ELLEN OSBORN.



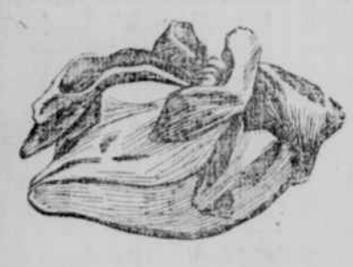
STRINGS ARE ATTACHED TO ALL HATS OF THE CABRIOLET SHAPE.

THE SEASON'S POKE.

A ROLLING VELVET BRIM IS BECOMING TO PRETTY HAIR.

HAT OF HUNTER'S GREEN VELVET WITH PLUMES OF WOOD BROWN.

A SIMPLE MATTER IN VELVET WITH TWO ORDINARY PLUMES.



MARIE ANTOINETTE BLUE VELVET WITH DARKEST LEAF GREEN IN A TOQUE.

CAN BE WORN WELL FRONT OR FAR BACK.

THIS HAT ABSOLUTELY REQUIRES TWO VERY LONG OSTRICH FEATHERS.

AN OLD-FASHIONED SHAPE VERY BECOMING TO FRESH YOUNG FACES.

THIS CLASSIC SHAPE CAN BE WORN ON ANY OCCASION.

THIS SERVICEABLE HAT IS TRIMMED WITH A SPREADING BOW AND TWO WHITE WINGS.

The Skeptic's Philosophy.

(Written for The Times).

Oh man, that fills the awful space
'Twixt life and death, so known as time,
Can'st thou account for thy brief stay
Or reckon on thy next abode?
The master's touch is in thy mould;
No sculptor ever wrought before
An image half so fair as thine,
Yet all thy life were but a day.
The bending canopy of night
Were but the veil of destiny
That marks thy transient stay.
Fashioned to rule—this world thy throne—
Each element of nature in thy hand,
Grand possibilities were thine
Couldst thou the morrow see!
Thou claimest for thy self some inborn spark,
Blown into flame by time—fanned by eternity,
Yet were the shadows of thy silent tomb
Unlit to mortal eye. The end
Of all thy plans were hid in death.
The very incandescent orb above
That scintillating saw thy birth
Hath watched a myriad lights like thine,
As tapers burning in a night,
Paler and paler grow, until out.
So will the mirthful, babbling brook
Its oft told song still murmur on
When thou art gone. The mighty peaks
That with majestic air have stood
Unmoved by all the storms of time,
Will proudly rise in bold command
Above thy sleeping bones. And when,
For aught I know, thou are forgot
The stars will yet be twinkling on,
Nor pale their glimmering lights.
Survive thee! yes, the very dust,
Parent of thee and all thy kind.
Will chant its solemn requiem.
O'er thy poor silent form.
Is this thy boasting and thy pride?
Then shows me that mysterious hand
That rends the curtain of the tomb
And makes for thee another day
Unbounded by an evil night,
That I may know and understand
That death is not a "dreamless sleep"
But only immortality.

H. WIRT HOLLOWAY.

Ashland, Va., Oct. 26, 1899.

October Woods and Waysides.

Curious fungi, orange or brown, stand out from tree trunk or fallen logs. Tiny shelves they seem, and we fall to wondering what woodfolk use them.

Not the squirrels, for they hide their store of nuts in hollow trees, and out-of-the-way crannies. Not the nut hatch for this bird has the curious habit of setting its favorite nut in the crotch of a tree. What is it then, what tiny brown creature lies in this broad brown one, waved and mottled with white?

It is astonishing what two minutes of absolute silence will do for one in the woods. If we sit still so long and watch carefully, we shall soon see that little brown bunch suddenly expand, and then a long, queer thrill. We hear such sounds in the woods—all about us, and our little friend lying on the fungus has just added his note. He is the Hyla, a piping frog, who greeted us from a bog last April, and now no longer aquatic, is quite at home among the trees, and will keep the wood musical till November.

Look in the vines growing over your piazza, look in the shrubs upon your lawn, there you will find another of these shrill voiced vocalists. You must look long and well before your eyes distinguish him from the greens and browns he is nestled among. It is the Acris gryllus.

When does he rest these autumn days? All day long the air is filled with his shrill chirping. Wake in the night and listen,—he is at it still. His fall season may not be long, but he utilizes it.

"There's a little band of singers
Every evening comes and lingers
'Neath the window of my cottage in the trees;
And with dark they raise their voices,
While the gathering night rejoices,
And the leaves join in the chorus with the breeze.
Then the twinkling stars come out
To enjoy the merry rout,
And the squirrels range themselves upon a log.
While the fireflies furnish
That they read their notes aright—
The katydid, the cricket and the frog."

From Vick's Magazine for October.

A Prolonged Address.

"Does your wife talk until she gets the last word?"

"Yes, and she talks after that, too."—Chicago Record.

W. BOURKE COCKRAN, SKETCHED FROM LIFE.